

## ROUTING AND RECORD SHEET

SUBJECT: (Optional)

Language Incentive Program

FROM:

DO Representative for LDC

EXTENSION

NO.

DATE 2 December 1981

TO: (Officer designation, room number, and building)

DATE

RECEIVED

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OFFICER'S INITIALS

COMMENTS (Number each comment to show from whom to whom. Draw a line across column after each comment.)

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Chairman  
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DO/A REGISTRY  
FILE: 19

81-0207/7

1 December 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: Language Development Committee Members

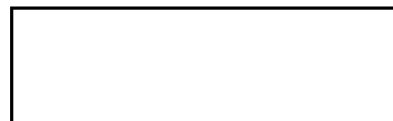
FROM :   
DO Senior Training Officer

SUBJECT : Language Incentive Program

1. As one of the newer arrivals to the language training scene I have had to spend part of the last three months just trying to grasp the many dimensions and parts of the Language Incentive Program. With only three recommendations the DO is concurring in the latest re-write of the LIP because it represents an accurate codification of the program as it has developed over the past two years. Nonetheless, this also is an opportune time to convey some basic thoughts on and reservations about the overall program which I have which are substantially shared by the component training officers within the DO.

a. First, the program began without a clearly focused objective and has been lopsided in favor of rewarding employees monetarily for language use and maintenance, the latter often without genuine employee effort or challenging criteria, and with only secondary emphasis on language achievement. As an incentive program it ought to be used to foster increased language competence; payments for language use and maintenance are means to an end, not ends in themselves. Therefore, in the opening statement of LIP we have recommended that primacy be attached to language achievement as the intended goal of LIP, not monetary reward for language use which may be the hope of employees but not in itself a guarantor of enhanced language competence.

b. Second, the LIP is an administrative monster whose growth, complexity and confusion has been a direct outgrowth of it having been launched before hard thinking was done on what it ought to accomplish. A very good case can be made that we ought to only be paying for language achievement and only to those who are available for service where the language can be used. The weakest link in the DO language training record has been our propensity for shortchanging



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C O N F I D E N T I A L

the formal language training itself, a matter that is readily cured by linking all incentive payments to language achievement. Such an approach would create its own pressures to leave people in training for the duration of the prescribed language program.

c. Third, language maintenance itself has been stretched to the breaking point because, again, the LIP was conceived and has been implemented principally as a monetary awards program and not fundamentally a language achievement program. Many individuals are being paid to maintain languages and will collect their annual rewards because the criteria are so relaxed. The net language enhancement quotient of this aspect of LIP, which is very costly to administer, is questionable because the maintenance levels have been set too low and because the testing is so infrequent.

d. Our second recommendation was that the ultimate goal of the achievement program be set at the "5" level; excellence ought to be pursued as elusive as it may be. Finally, we recommended that, so long as we pay for language use, there ought to be a higher payment made to those fully qualified and using two languages in a dual language position. Otherwise the dual language dimension is penalizing in effect.

2. There has already been much turbulence associated with the LIP and the field station personnel especially have been buffeted by change after change. Thus, it is felt that the current codification ought to be completed and the LIP revision approved. During the next, third year of LIP it is recommended that the LDC, as it examines the monetary levels paid under the program and evaluates the FY 1981 program in terms of its effectiveness in broadening and deepening our foreign language skills, would also weigh the merits of shifting towards language achievement incentives and away from payments for maintenance and use. In the long run such a change would certainly simplify the program and very likely be more effective.

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